



U.S. Immigration
and Customs
Enforcement

News Release

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Fugitive alien and two U.S. citizens nabbed by ICE for drug smuggling

St. Thomas, US. Virgin Islands—A 32-year-old Haitian national with an outstanding order of deportation and two United States citizens were arrested here yesterday by U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) special agents working along side agents of the Drug Enforcement Administration (DEA) High Intensity Drug Trafficking Area (HIDTA). The three individuals were arrested for allegedly attempting to import two kilograms of cocaine.

Dominique Mathurin, of Haiti and United States citizens Francisco Perez-Polanco, 23, and Dionicio Mercedes, 56, were arrested after a U.S. Customs and Border Protection (CBP) patrol aircraft spotted a suspicious vessel as it was approaching St. Thomas from Culebra, Puerto Rico.

The 22-foot vessel, occupied by Perez Polanco, was docked at the Crown Bay Marina. Mathurin and Dionicio Mercedes allegedly transported the contraband to the marina to hand off the cocaine to Polanco, the intended recipient.

ICE special agents, acting on CBP information, seized the contraband, a 1994 model pick up truck and the 22-foot vessel.

“This arrest shows how ICE and its law enforcement partners are working together in the U.S. Virgin Islands to keep drugs off the streets,” said Lydia St. John-Mellado, acting special agent-in-charge of ICE in Puerto Rico. “ICE and our Department of Homeland Security (DHS) partners will continue using all our resources and authorities to detect, investigate and bring to justice those who violate our immigration and customs laws.”

The U.S. Attorney’s Office for the District of the U.S. Virgin Islands has accepted the case for prosecution. Mathuring, Perez Polanco and Mercedes are in federal custody and had their initial appearance before a U.S. magistrate judge today.

Mathurin faces deportation upon the resolution of his criminal proceedings.

The public is reminded that a criminal complaint and or indictment contain only charges and are not evidence of guilt. The defendants are presumed innocent and are entitled to a fair trial and the government has the burden of proving guilt beyond a reasonable doubt.

ICE

U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement was established in March 2003 as the largest investigative arm of the Department of Homeland Security. ICE is comprised of four integrated divisions that form a 21st century law enforcement agency with broad responsibilities for a number of key homeland security priorities.